

## **Initial ROPE Meeting for Cass/Winnibigoshish July 10<sup>th</sup> (10:00-11:45)**

### *Facilitators:*

Brenda Halter-Glenn (US Forest Service)

Jeffrey Kleinert (US. Corps of Engineers)

### **Introductions of facilitators and people attending including their name and organization.**

A meeting agenda and handout was provided to all meeting participants and this is attached as enclosure 1. A press release discussing rising water levels was also handed out to those present. Jeffrey Kleinert provided specific information relating to Lake Winnibigoshish, Leech Lake, Pokegama and Sandy Lake, which are operated by the Corps of Engineers for flood control. Brenda Halter-Glenn provided information on the Cass Lake level and flow from Knutson Dam that is operated by the US Forest Service. Dennis Mears of Ottertail Power reported present flows from their dam and the Bemidji Lake level. All parties anticipated high lake levels and stream flows to continue for at least the next two weeks.

Jeffrey Kleinert presented Part One of the handout Upper Mississippi Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Study. Numerous questions were asked including several which questioned the number of residential dwellings found in the Cass and Winnibigoshish “bounce” zone. Many felt that it was low and the survey underestimated the actual numbers. Also of concern were dwellings on river stretches between the lakes. Jeff explained that this was the first study and these are preliminary numbers. In the future other factors may be evaluated such as non-living structures, shoreline erosion and biological effects.

Brenda Halter-Glenn presented Part Two of the handout. Specifics were provided on the role of the Lake Groups and volunteers who should be included. A list of groups to contact that were not present at the meeting was developed. This includes the following:

- 1) Representative from Hubbard County (county commissioner)
- 2) Turtle River Watershed Association
- 3) Tribal representative
- 4) Cass Lake Chamber of Commerce (Dan Evans)
- 5) Local media representative
- 6) Mississippi Headwaters Board
- 7) Sporting Groups
- 8) Law Enforcement (Beltrami County Sheriff (Keith Winger) Cass County (Randy Fisher)
- 9) Other lake associations
- 10) Soil and Water Conservations Districts (Beltrami, Cass and Hubbard)

Jeff discussed the ground rules and meeting procedures on page 2 of the handout, and volunteer and observer rosters were sent around to allow attendees to sign-up. Attendees who were seasonal residents were encouraged to sign up as well as year-round residents. Meetings are tentatively planned to start in the fall and members of the committee can participate via the website where meeting notes will be posted. Ryan Hilmar and Mike Schwab co-lead the Cass/Winnibigoshish ROPE Lake Group.

John O'Leary (Operations Manager for Corps of Engineers) informed the group that the last time an assessment was done along the Mississippi River was a generation ago. He discussed the opportunity the ROPE study presents for the public to participate and be involved with the process. He thanked the attendees on behalf of the COE and USFS for taking the time to attend. In this study we will determine what we have to protect and some suggestions may arise from this study such as acquiring property that is in flood prone areas.

A short discussion followed as to who has supervisory authority over Ottertail Dam. Upon request Jeffrey Kleinert said he would find out.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am and attendees were allowed to talk with the facilitators individually following the meeting.

#### Enclosure 1

Agenda and meeting handouts (attached below as a PDF file)



Acrobat Document